

REMARKS

Claims 2-6 have been cancelled.

Claim 1 has been amended.

The Examiner stated in the Office Action that claim 1 of the referenced application is rejected as being unpatentable over Katoh (U.S. Patent No. 5,970,819; '819 hereinafter) in view of Lu U.S. Patent 5,208,944 or Ching U.S. Patent 5,772,351 or Chung U.S. Patent 6, 163,928.

The '819 patent is deemed by the Examiner to disclose the claimed invention except a plurality of resilient pads as claimed.

However, after a careful review of the '819 patent, applicant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner's viewpoint. The present application discloses a hinge assembly having a fixing ring (2) with a pair of extensions (21) corresponding to and received in the cutouts (513) of the first annular body (511) of the position seat. Whereas, the '819 patent discloses that the stationary cam member (4) (the fixing ring as indicated by the Examiner) has a square projecting portion (4d) to correspond to the square hole (2b) of the bearing portion (2a, 3a) (the first annular body as indicated by the Examiner) such that when the square projecting portion is received in the corresponding square hole, there is no relative movement between the bearing portion and the stationary cam member.

From the description above, it is noted that the result achieved through the present invention may be the same as that of the '819 disclosure, i.e., to rule out the possibility of movement between the fixing ring (the stationary cam member) and the first annular body (the bearing portion). However, the structural relationship between the fixing ring and the first annular body to achieve this result is not the same. The '819 patent utilizes the cooperative relationship between a square projecting portion and a square hole while the present invention utilizes the cooperative relationship between the extensions and the cutouts.

The '819 patent involves extension of the square projection portion into the square hole, while the present invention as claimed in amended claim 1 involves only the resting of the pair of extensions on bottom faces defining the cutouts. Therefore, the structure of the amended claim 1 is not disclosed or taught by the '819 patent. Further, the technique used in the present invention is not well known in the art such that a skilled person in the art would easily come up with same structure as the present invention by reading the '819 patent disclosure without hindsight to the present invention.

Furthermore, the Examiner should note that the element denoted reference numeral (9) in the '819 patent is an adjusting element and not a securing element as is disclosed in the present application. The rotating shaft (5) in the '819 patent has a threaded portion (5d) in the mediate portion of the rotating shaft (5) to mate with the adjusting nut (9). Thus, the adjusting nut (9) is able only to adjust the cam torque and friction (as required) after the spring (8) is mounted around the rotating shaft (5).

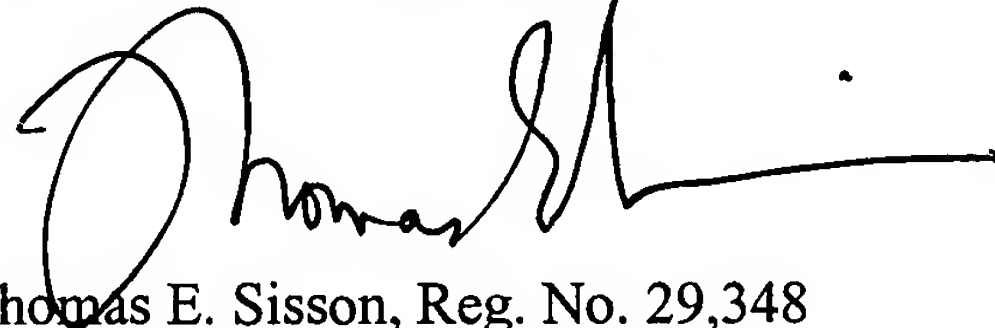
Referring to the securing element of the present invention, it should be noted that this securing element is mated to a threaded portion formed on the distal end of the connection rod to secure engagement of components on the connection rod. Thus, the securing element in the present invention may be a common nut and pad combination and is adapted to the distal end of the connection rod outside the annular bodies. There is no adjustment function involved in securing the securing element of the present invention. Again, the adjusting nut of the '819 disclosure is provided to the mediate portion of the rotation shaft so as to adjust the resilience of the spring.

Therefore, it is concluded that the invention of amended claim 1 is not obvious in reference to any of the cited patents.

In order to overcome the Examiner's rejection, applicant has amended claim 1 of the present application to incorporate inventive structural features thereby placing amended claim 1 in line with the inventive structure as described and shown in the specifications.

The Applicant asked the Examiner to reconsider amended claim 1 in light of the arguments presented and to issue a Notice of Allowance.

Respectfully submitted,
JACKSON WALKER L.L.P.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Thomas E. Sisson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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